

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are cancelled without prejudice. Claim 17 is amended, including but not limited to incorporating the substance of Claims 18, 23, and 24, in a further effort to define patentable subject matter over the art of record. Claims 17 and 19-21 remain, with no claim previously allowed.

Independent Claims 17 was last rejected as unpatentable over *Razin* (US 6,125,377) in view of *Felt* (US 6,092,092). The Applicants respectfully traverse that rejection as possibly applied to amended Claim 17.

That claim now defines, in greater detail than heretofore recited, the format checker component of the present invention. The disclosed embodiment of that format checker is described at pages 16-18 of the Applicants' specification. As defined in Claim 17, that method comprises determining a formatting run (the smallest section of text within the document having the same formatting attributes), and comparing the formatting run to a consistency rule set to determine whether an inconsistency exists relative to that rule set. If an inconsistency exists, the method of Claim 17 requires identifying a majority case and a minority case of inconsistencies. The claim defines a majority case as a set of formatting properties associated with the most formatting runs in the document having an analogues formatting property, and defines a minority case as a set of formatting properties that is inconsistent with the majority case as the inconsistency is defined by the consistency rule set. The method of Claim 17 further requires revealing the minority case and the majority case to a user.

Claim 17 thus now defines the method previously recited by Claims 17 and 18, albeit with more particular limitations as described above. The rejection of Claim 18

asserts that *Razin*, at lines 12-26 of column 4, discloses identifying a minority case or a majority case of an inconsistency. That passage from *Razin*, "Comparison of Known Elements", discusses examining so-called Known Elements based on a Proofreading Rules Base. *Razin* mentions various inconsistencies that may arise, such as the presence of attributes that differ from styles in other occurrences of a Known Elements, and two or more Elements that are either duplicates or substantially inconsistent with other similar Known Elements. However, *Razin* does not disclose that one may identify a majority case and a minority case of inconsistencies. *Razin* thus is silent as to this aspect of the present invention, to which amended Claim 17 is directed.

It follows that *Razin* likewise fails to teach a formatting-consistency method including the particulars of a "majority case" and a "minority case" of an inconsistency, as Claim 17 recites those limitations. With *Razin*, the user finds no guidance as to whether any detected inconsistency in a document fits the definition of "majority case", defined as a set of formatting properties associated with the most formatting runs in the document having an analogous formatting property, or a "minority case" having a set of formatting properties inconsistent with the majority case. One of ordinary skill, knowing of *Razin* and *Felt* but not of the present teachings, would not have found those teachings fairly suggested by that prior art. Accordingly, Claim 17 defines a method nonobvious and, therefore, patentable over that art.

Dependent Claim 19 adds the further limitation of offering a suggested case format to the user, in response to revealing a minority case to the user. Claim 19 was rejected as unpatentable over *Razin* in view of *Newbold* (US 5,576,955), but not including *Felt*. In any case, the rejection of Claim 9 asserts that *Razin* discloses the steps

of revealing the minority case or majority case to a user, citing "Figure 5B" (*Razin* has no Figure 5B); and citing column 3, lines 51-52 and other references in the specification. Column 3, lines 51-52 merely mention that if heuristic processing does not suffice to resolve ambiguity (in the Interpretation Rules Base), the user may be requested to input additional information to guide the interpretation. Column 4, lines 32-35 state that *Razin's* process "has proofread the document, noting inconsistencies among linked elements, enabling any inconsistencies to be remedied either by application of a further rules base or by user instruction." Column 14, lines 45-48, talking about deconstruction of document into its structural components, mentions that "it has proofread the document, noting inconsistencies among linked elements, enabling any inconsistencies to be remedied either by application of a further rules base or by user instruction." The Applicants respectfully submit that those broad and general statements by *Razin*, absent the Applicants' own teachings, would not have placed one of ordinary skill in possession of the method including in combination the limitations of Claims 17 and 19. Nothing in *Razin* mentions majority and minority cases, nor suggests any process for defining, revealing, and dealing with those two cases. Accordingly, Claim 19 remains untaught to one of ordinary skill by the applied art.

Claim 20, now depending from Claim 19, adds the further limitations of determining whether the user accepts the suggested case format (as in Claim 19), and if so, reformatting the minority case to the suggested case format. The rejection of Claim 20 asserts that *Razin* discloses those added method limitations at column 10, lines 28-39; column 11, lines 2-6; and column 14, lines 45-48. However, column 14, lines 28-39 discusses heuristic processing in the absence of learned styles, which is contrary to the

present method in which formatting runs are determined and compared to a consistency rule set. That passage from *Razin* provides no guidance or teaching toward the limitations added by Claim 20.

Column 11, lines 2-6 of *Razin* mentions that where "neither the rules base nor heuristics suffice to guide the invention to determine a nature of the text under analyses, it requests additional input from the user to enable it to make a determination as to the nature of the Unknown Element." In other words, according to *Razin*, the user must supply an answer where both the rules base and heuristics fail to do so. That statement by *Razin* is not surprising and could apply to many different systems. However, it is not a teaching for the limitations of Claim 20.

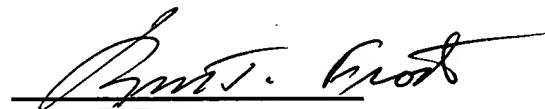
Column 14, lines 45-48 in *Razin* merely mention that after proofreading the document and noting inconsistencies among linked elements, the user may remedy those inconsistencies either by applying a further rules base or by user instruction. However, Claim 20 calls for the reformatting the minority case to the suggested case format, when the user accepts the suggested case format. Neither that passage nor elsewhere in *Razin* suggests any such limitation. Accordingly, Claim 20 is patentable thereover.

Claim 21 depends from Claim 19 and adds that the suggested case format is the majority case. As pointed out above, neither *Razin* nor *Felt* discuss a majority case and a minority case in the context of the presently-claimed invention. Accordingly, Claim 21 is patentable thereover.

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office Action identified above. The Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance and solicit a notice to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD



Date: August 26, 2005

Roger T. Frost
Reg. No. 22,176

Merchant & Gould, LLC
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, MN 55402-0903
Telephone: 404.954.5100

